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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000277

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OPS CENTER: PLEASE PASS TO D STAFF AND THE TRAVELING PARTY

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: LAVROV SAYS NO TO AN AGREED DOCUMENT
AT CORFU

REF: SG(2009)0571

Classified By: A/POLAD A. "Hoot" Baez. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C/NF) SUMMARY: In a letter to NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said that he did not anticipate the adoption a joint document at the June 27 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Ministerial in Corfu. Consistent with Lavrov's letter, the Russian Mission on June 26 killed efforts to have an NRC "way forward" document as a key deliverable in Corfu. The Mission also said that Russia would not accept NATO's invitation to participate in Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean. While it does appear resumption of military-to-military cooperation will be agreed in principle in Corfu, important details will have to be finalized later. Lavrov also used his letter to continue Moscow's tradition of "cherry picking" from agreed documents, citing and twisting out of context certain agreed principles while ignoring others. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) On June 26, NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer distributed to Allies a letter he received from Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov regarding the June 27 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) Ministerial in Corfu. (see para 5 below) In the letter, Lavrov said that he did not foresee the adoption of joint documents in Corfu and argued that a "full-fledged reset" of the NRC will require "regaining trust." Lavrov also stressed that he saw the meeting as an opportunity to confirm NRC member states' commitment to the principles upon which the NATO-Russia relationship was founded, arguing that the following principles should take priority: indivisibility of security, fulfillment of obligations under international law and political guarantees of military restraint.

Russian Actions Consistent with Letter; Few Deliverables

13. (C/NF) Consistent with the letter, Russia refused in the June 26 meeting of the NRC Preparatory Committee to agree an NRC "way forward" document which many Allies had hoped would be a key ministerial deliverable, although work on the document will continue after the ministerial. The Russian Mission also announced that Moscow was not in a position to respond positively to NATO's invitation for a Russian vessel to participate in Operation Active Endeavor, NATO's modest Article 5 counterterrorist operation in the Mediterranean Sea. It does appear, however, that there will be an

agreement in principle at the ministerial to restart military-to-military cooperation, although political guidance setting out the exact framework within which such cooperation will take place will likely have to be defined later.

COMMENT

14. (C/NF) Lavrov's letter continues Moscow's tradition of "cherry picking" parts of agreed documents it likes, while ignoring the rest. Both publicly and privately, for example, Russia stresses the inclusion of the reference to the "indivisibility of security," twisting the phrase to argue that NATO's actions--including enlargement--should not be taken at the expense of Russian security interests. It ignores, however, the principle enshrined in the Founding Act that all NATO-Russia member states will respect "the inherent right" of all states "to choose the means to ensure their own security." Through its assertion of a sphere of privileged interests, Russia also disregards the Founding Act's call for a Europe "without dividing lines or spheres of influence limiting the sovereignty of any state."

TEXT OF THE LAVROV LETTER

15. (SBU) An unofficial translation of the Lavrov letter is reproduced below:

Moscow, "22" June 2009

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Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Hereby I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 11, 2009 by which as Chairman of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) you invite me to take part in the Council session at the level of ministers of foreign affairs on the island of Corfu on June 27, 2009.

I will take part in this meeting. I assume that the upcoming NRC will be informal, which does not suppose a fixed agenda or adopting a joint document.

I agree with you that it is necessary to confirm commitment to the principles contained in NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Co-operation and Security between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Russian Federation of May 27, 1997 and the Rome Declaration "NATO - Russia Relations: A New Quality" of May 28, 2002, which all the NRC member-states should rigorously adhere to. The following principles stated in The Founding Act take priority: indivisibility of security for all the states in the Euroatlantic region, fulfillment of obligations under international law and political guarantees of military restraint.

Secretary-General, the forthcoming meeting will be a good opportunity to frankly discuss with my colleagues how to restore normal functioning of the Council together, so that it works "in all weathers", (sic) without failures. It would be useful to exchange views on concrete steps, which ought to be taken to maintain sustainable political dialogue between Russia and NATO. It is that over the past year NATO-Russia cooperation has suffered, perhaps, the most acute crisis in the entire history of our engagement. Therefore, it would make sense to learn the lessons for the future. A full-fledged reset of the Council's work, including political dialogue and practical cooperation, requires regaining trust between us on the basis of due account of mutual interests and concerns, ensuring equality in the dialogue.

Sincerely yours,

//s//

Sergey Lavrov

END TEXT
DAALDER